

5-1992

Apex : A Point of Departure, Vol.1, No.04 (May 1992)


Annette Dragon

Naomi Falcone

Diane Matthews

Madeleine Winter

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WHO'S NEXT?

NEW JERSEY - New Jersey recently passed gay rights legislation making it the fifth state to accord full civil rights to gays and lesbians, after Wisconsin, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Hawaii. Let's hope this trend continues!

OUT AT THE OSCARS

LOS ANGELES - Though Gay activists were unable to follow through on their promise to disrupt the 64th Annual Academy Awards Show, their widely publicized protests over Hollywood's portrayals of Lesbians and Gay men in film helped turn the film industry's biggest night into one of the most political in recent memory.

As protesters carried on a noisy protest outside the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, numerous presenters inside wore red ribbons to symbolize support for people with AIDS and, in an unexpected development, two people who accepted awards prominently acknowledged their same-sex companions.

San Francisco filmmaker Debra Chasnoff, 32, won the Academy Award for best documentary short-subject for *Deadly Deception: General Electric, Nuclear Weapons and the Environment*. The 36-minute film is an exposé about people who were killed or deformed by leaking radioactivity around a GE nuclear power plant in Hanford, Wash.

"I want to thank my life partner Kim, who always had faith in me, and our son Noah, who reminds me on a daily basis why it is so important not to give up and to keep working for peace and justice," she said. Many news reports made mention of Chasnoff's speech; but, none noted her acknow-

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VOL. 1, NO. 4

May 1992

TEENS JOIN ACT UP TO TARGET BUSH

Scores of teens and over 50 adults teamed up to spend the afternoon protesting President Bush's lack of a national AIDS policy. The rally began at 12:30 p.m. with an informal teach-in for concerned parents, continued with a 1:00 press conference, and finished in a march toward Bush's estate at Walker's Point.



photo by Annette Dragon

TASL (Teen Actions Save Lives), the new AIDS activist group headquartered in Kennebunk, was joined by students from other area high schools in their demand for free access to condoms and HIV prevention education in public schools.

TASL's demands were part of the overall theme of the march, which asked that Bush implement the recommendations of his experts on the National Commission on AIDS. ACT UP/Portland made fact sheets and banners explaining the recommendations, which include universal health care, better access to experimental drugs, anti-discrimination measures, legalization of IV needles, standard HIV prevention plans for the nation, and many others.

"The point of today's march is to get the information out," said ACT UP member Dennis Lyons. "The facts will speak for

More TEENS ➤ page 10

MAKE HISTORY!

Portland residents have the opportunity to help pass the city gay rights ordinance now being sponsored by Portland City Councilor Peter E. O'Donnell. Make your voice heard! Call your councilor:

<i>Councilor</i>	<i>District</i>
Peter E. O'Donnell 774-0148	1
Anne B. Pringle 774-0437	2
Thomas H. Allen, Esq. (Mayor) 772-0666	3
Cheryl H. Leeman 773-4161	4
Charles William Harlow 797-3775	5
Theodore T. Rand 766-2087	A/L
Linda E. Abromson 797-4438	A/L
Esther B. Clenott 775-0905	A/L
Richard W. Paulson, Jr. 772-5023	A/L

Final reading and vote to be held in May
(date & time not yet determined)
For more information call 874-2384

If you don't know which district you live in, contact City Hall.

MAKE HISTORY!

LETTERS

The Collective

Annette Dragon
Naomi Falcone
Diane Matthews
Madeleine Winter

Contributors

Erica Rand Stan Clough
Troy Cuscia Malita Argyle
Bee Bell Edna Healy

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Winterfalcon Technical
Computer Services*

Logo Design by Grapheteria

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Phoenix Press is a collectively run organization whose purpose is to build and empower our community by providing positive lesbian/gay images. We will be a forum for the exchange of ideas through debate and discussion. The collective will work to reflect the political and social diversity of our community.

SUBMISSIONS

All submissions should be typed and double-spaced if at all possible. Please include your name and phone number in case we have any questions. Your name will be withheld at your request, but any material received without a contact name or number will not be published. Submissions *must* be received by the 20th of each month. Thank you for your contributions.

P.O. Box 4743
Portland, ME 04112
(207) 282-8091

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Dear APEX Readers:

Last month I listed a letter in another publication looking for input on presenting a Gay and Lesbian pride march in Portland this year. The response was unanimously positive, though not overwhelming. As a result, a permit to stage our sixth street march in Portland on Saturday, June 6 has been requested by the Pride Committee. As this will also be the weekend for the Lesbian and Gay film festival, the film festival folks have given their consent to presenting the march on this date, and no plans will conflict.

The march will be from City Hall to the Deering Oaks rose garden area. We will again present a marching band, floats, group banners and a motorcycle contingent. We will make extra effort to get media coverage and hope that this will be an opportunity for all facets of the lesbian, gay and bisexual community of Maine to present a positive and jubilant self-portrait.

The one big catch is buying the insurance which is required by the city for a street permit as opposed to being "officially" a sidewalk event. The insurance will cost about \$500 for this specific event and we are dependent on donations to purchase it. Donations of any amount should be sent (this will not put you on a mailing list) to: The Pride Committee, P.O. Box 681, Scarborough, ME 04074.

Questions about the march, the Committee or planning meetings may be sent to this address or by calling (207) 883-6934. Parade marshals and other volunteers are also needed.

For the '92 Pride Committee,

Michael Rossetti

Dear APEX:

It is with great appreciation that we send this check, subscription request and letter! It should also be noted that we are sending a copy to *Our Paper*.

I have been an avid reader, subscriber, volunteer and contributor in various forms since the early eighties. Before I found *Our Paper*, I had no idea where to find out about the location of a Gay bar, let alone an intelligent panel discussion, concert, bookstore, coffee shop, Gay film fest, restaurant, accepting landlord, medical services, etc...etc.!!! As far as I knew I was the only -GASPI- Lesbian in the state! I've thoroughly enjoyed the paper and followed it through its many changes. The collective's varied and changing members have taken it down new streets, over bumps and generally, did a good job!

Two years ago, my "soulmate" and I moved to the sticks of western Maine and to help ease the homesickness we felt for the Portland community, took out a subscription. This did not prove helpful though. *Our Paper* was going through some changes and this time it suffered. It would not arrive until the 15th!! They started advertising 1-900-sexx numbers! They refused to report a news item concerning a Lesbian Mom's confrontation with the local BSA! That doesn't sound like a paper that claims to be a voice for Gays and Lesbians and that "Our Paper is your paper" to me!! It's time for a departure! Open the windows! Let the winds of change blow through! GOOD LUCK APEX!! Look smart *Our Paper*! You're not the only game in town any more!!

Sincerely,
Connie Pelkey

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to two contributors to your April issue. First to Rosie, who doesn't understand "what is the big deal about not being allowed into the Boy Scouts": If you had a child who was ever hurt in any way by ignorance or bigotry, you would understand what the "big deal" is. Discrimination against lesbians and gay men by any group or organization in any form hurts all of us and all of our children.

apex \ˈā-peks\ *n.* 1 **a:** the uppermost point: VERTEX (the ~ of a mountain) **b:** the narrowed or pointed end: TIP (the ~ of the tongue) 2: the highest or culminating point (the ~ of her career) **syn** see SUMMIT.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the collective.

LETTERS

You acknowledge that the right of lesbian and gay parents to adopt children IS a "big deal." Don't forget that this right is denied to many for exactly the same reasons that the Boy Scouts discriminate - the perception that lesbians and gay men harm children. This attitude must be challenged wherever it is expressed - with the full strength of our social, political and financial influence.

To Bee Bell: I was disturbed by your use of the term "breeders" to refer to heterosexuals. It strikes me as very similar to the practice of referring to women as "bitches." The implication is that the process of begetting and bearing children is base, rather than an extraordinary miracle. Such a miracle produced you. Many lesbians and gay men are mothers and fathers. Isn't there already enough poison around us without dumping more with this kind of name-calling?

Sincerely,
Lee Nicoloff

Dear APEX:

The Christian Civic League of Maine (CCLM), under the misguided stewardship of Jasper Wyman, has won permission from the Superior Court to go ahead and circulate a voter petition which would place the following question on the ballot in 1993:

Do you favor the change in Maine law concerning voter approval in a statewide referendum of legislation pertaining to discrimination based on sexual orientation, as proposed by citizen petition?

As Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) staff attorney Mary Bonauto explains, "Mr. Wyman is trying to make any future legislative prohibitions of discrimination against lesbians and gay men under the Maine Human Rights Act depend

on prior voter approval. What [Wyman] wants to do is add something to the Human Rights Act that creates a group that would be singled out for adverse treatment." She goes on to say, "While we have faith in the fairness of the people of Maine, equal treatment before the law should not be based on a popularity contest."

What is the next step? Jasper Wyman and the CCLM must initiate a petition drive to collect approximately 53,000 voter signatures to get this question on the ballot in 1993. How will they be able to persuade reasonable Maine people that they should sign this petition? Yep, you guessed it, by convincing people that for some reason gays are not worthy of equal protections under the law, or, that gays are already protected, or, that the gay 'lifestyle' is inimical to 'family values', or, that gays are looking for special rights.

In short, we can expect a dirty, vicious campaign. When it comes to lesbians and gay men, Wyman's antagonism, though currently wrapped in the sticky goo of sanctimonious love, has never been restrained by truth or common decency.

What can we do? First, we must recognize the size of the problem. We are David challenging Goliath. The CCLM is a well-funded organization with a paid staff of five. MLGPA has little money and no paid staff. We are, however, rich in our friends and allies, most importantly GLAD and MCLU (Maine Civil Liberties Union). It is critical that we generously support these organizations. Second, we must remember that prejudice is always strongest among those who believe that they do not know any lesbians or gay men, or anyone who is related to gays. Those of us who are gay must, where at all possible, quietly and firmly save our families, friends, and col-

leagues from the error of assuming we are straight. Yes, this is a request for greater visibility at a time of heightened danger. Coming out will take courage, but the personal rewards are enormous and the political gain incomparable. Third, we must develop a statewide public education strategy to counter the CCLM disinformation campaign. MLGPA is currently working on this with the advice and participation of our friends. We will keep you posted as it unfolds. Stay tuned.

Sive Neilan
President, MLGPA

Dear APEX:

I have kept silent throughout the furor surrounding the issue of Lesbians' rights to participate in the boy scouts of amerikkka. I realize that my silence comes from my fear of putting out an analysis that i anticipate will not be welcome in the local lesbian community and i will experience a greater sense of alienation from the Portland Lesbian Community.

But I can't stand it anymore. Because I perceive the boy scouts of amerikkka as being dangerous for women and girls. It is a tool used to indoctrinate boys into the heteropatriarchy. It is an organization that is militaristic in origin. It is hierarchical, it emphasizes competition, it teaches boys to follow order, it emphasizes patriotism, it organizes boys into packs. Packs of boys are dangerous to girls. Hitler youth came out of the boy scout movement. The boy scouts of amerikkka helps to create soldiers and reinforces prick power. It is one of the many training grounds for boys in the war against women. IT'S DANGEROUS

To me fighting for a lesbian's right to par-

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Norma Kraus Eule, MSW, LCSW
Licensed Clinical Social Worker

PSYCHOTHERAPY
Individual & Group

10 Minot Avenue
Auburn, Maine 04210 (207) 784-8747



MAUREEN T. FERRITER
COUNSELOR, M.Ed.

139 Park Street
Portland, Maine 04101
(207) 775-9061

WHERE WE'VE BEEN - an exploration of lesbian and gay history

by Stan Clough

One aspect of our struggle for equality is the fight to obtain the right to marry the ones we love. Civil and religious authorities have denied us this option for centuries. On the one hand, they criticize us for the supposed "impermanence" of our relationships, but on the other they will not consider giving us the same institution which they claim legitimizes and strengthens relationships. The Unitarian Universalist Church has been an ally of our community; they regularly perform same-sex marriages in larger towns and cities. In the Ancient and Medieval past, many cultures apparently legitimized same-sex unions with marriage permits.

The Hittite Empire of what is now Central Turkey, flourished between the years 1700-1200 B.C. A careful reading of their manuscripts suggests that they allowed marriages between men, though these were carefully regulated, as were heterosexual unions. Their contemporaries, the Mycenaean Greeks, found the relationship between two male warriors to be legitimate. They considered the relationship between two males to be nobler than a heterosexual marriage. Consider Achilles and Patroclus, for example.

In ancient Sparta, male warriors married women after the age of thirty, but they also had a younger male "companion" who stayed with them for the rest of their lives. While the Spartan males were off at war, the wives were encouraged to take younger females as partners. If the husband did not return, the wife inherited his property and probably kept the younger woman as a permanent spouse. We know from legends that the Amazons avoided contact with men except for yearly visits to reproduce their society. The female warriors of the Amazon culture

married one another for life, just like their Spartan counterparts.

In Rome, during the late Republic (150-27 B.C.) and Early Empire (27 B.C. - 300 A.D.), marriages between men were probably allowed: they were certainly recognized to exist by such writers as Petronius and Plutarch. The Emperor Nero married two men on the floor of the Senate, while the Emperor Heliogabalus said that if one wanted to rise in Imperial government, he must marry the Princeps (prince). Lucian and Iamblichus wrote about lesbian marriages in their poems. Lucian relates of a certain Megilla of Lesbos, who was married to a woman from Corinth. On the other hand, poets like Seneca saw lesbian marriages as adultery.

For the lower classes in Rome, Petronius' *Satyricon* is evidence of formal marriages between two males. The ruling classes would have been less concerned with same-sex marriages between women of the lower classes. Their concern was with women of the Senatorial classes and their chastity.

With the advent of the Christian Roman Empire in the 4th Century A.D., same-sex marriages were eventually outlawed. During the Middle Ages, according to John Boswell, same-sex marriages occurred. In the 12th Century, Saint Aelred of Rievaulx stressed that the love between two men was not only spiritual, but intellectual. He intimates further it needs to be more than these...

Books to read:

Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality, John Boswell
Satyricon, Petronius
Satires, Lucian
On Sparta, Plutarch ▼

NO BUSINESS AS USUAL - this month in Portland activism

by Bee Bell

"If America ever goes fascist, the dictator will be a clergyman." Richard Plant.

Or maybe our clergyman's larger-scale counterpart, the corporate newspaperman? In a fit of amplitude this month, Guy Gannett's Portland "Pravda" *Herald* devoted an unprecedented five sentences to a story on the April 3rd bashing of a gay Portland man by seven to ten attackers. Better, *Herald* boys. Now how about moving such stories out of the trivial "Briefly" margin and onto the front page, where hate crimes belong? Infuriated members of FAR (Feminists Against Rape) met with *Herald* editor Lou Ureneck April 21 to discuss the possibility of decent hate crime coverage, including repeated runs of rapists' police sketches. FAR rightly assumes a kinship between violence against women and all other hate crimes - particularly queer-bashing. Right on: it is often the perceived female within the queer that phobes attack.

Sad indeed that the man who was beaten refused to press charges against his assailants, several of whom were caught by the much-maligned Portland police. The root of the problem lay not with the cops but elsewhere, in our civil rights "system": the man was afraid he'd be fired for being gay. Such a firing would be perfectly legal in this city and state: believe it or not,



photo by Annette Dragon

More NO BUSINESS ✉ page 9

QUEER ON THE QUADS

edited by Erica Rand

The NELGBSA Conference

by Troy Cuscia

University of Massachusetts - Amherst

For any students out there who were so unfortunate as to miss this year's North East Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Student Alliance Conference, this is definitely an event to keep in mind for next spring. Where else can queer students have the opportunity to meet new friends, network for campus organizations, attend enlightening workshops, dance to great music, go to concerts and hear prominent queer speakers all in one weekend? Over 500 students who attended this year's conference now know that there is no other experience like NELGBSA.

NELGBSA is a student-run organization that held its first annual conference in 1984 at Harvard University. Since then, the conference has been held at different schools throughout the northeastern United States, as far north as Boston University and as far south as the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. This year, the LGBSU of the University of Delaware had the distinction of sponsoring this event, which has grown to amazing proportions. For many colleges and universities, this was the first year that their schools had sent representatives to NELGBSA; this was also the first year that bisexuals were included in the name of the organization. NELGBSA has also newly assembled caucuses for bisexuals, women and people of color to address particular issues & concerns in an effort to ensure that the programming is of benefit to all queer people. In short, NELGBSA is really going places.

The excitement began on Friday, March 27, as hundreds of queer students arrived in Newark, Delaware to register for the conference and to check into their hotel rooms. People were catching up with old friends and meeting new ones at the mixer that was held in the Student Center. It lasted until midnight, but that wasn't enough for most of us who rarely have the opportunity to meet so many new people at our own schools. Inevitably, the party moved to the hotels, where it was rumored that folks were still partying until the wee hours of the morning.

Saturday was a big day for everyone. Workshops were scheduled from the morning to late afternoon, and people were eager to attend those that addressed their issues. With dozens to choose from, it wasn't hard to find workshops that would interest as well as educate. The first session of workshops dealt with issues ranging from building strong and effective student groups to dealing with internalized homophobia. Others focused on examining racism, sexism and homophobia as well as the representation of "misbehavior" in women-centered fiction. Throughout the conference workshops were held focusing on bisexuality, safer sex, HIV/AIDS, relationships, S/M, coming out, Greek life (fraternities and sororities), same sex marriage, domestic violence and many other issues concerning all aspects of the queer community. Some addressed problems with which most of us are painfully familiar. Others gave us space to celebrate our differences and acknowledge pride in ourselves and our communities (something we should all do more often). More importantly, it gave us an opportunity to open up dialogue in which we could share and learn from each other.

Saturday was devoted to fun, as NELGBSA provided a concert for the weary conference-goers. The Washington Sisters performed first with their mix of jazz, a capella, blues and gospel. The three women (identical twin sisters and accompanist) got the crowd worked up with their rhythms and their messages of peace, pride and diversity. After the Washington Sisters' standing ovation, the Flirtations performed their arrangement of a capella tunes. The Flirtations are all male, all gay, multicultural and politically correct (most of the time) and their music can be appreciated by just about everyone, whether you like campy quintets, 50's pop or ballads with a social conscience.

Besides the musical highlights, the conference was sprinkled with distinguished guest speakers who entertained as well as inspired. The first speaker was Barbara Gittings, a lesbian activist for over 30 years. She formed the New York chapter of Daughters of Bilitis, one of the first lesbian organizations, and continues to march in the forefront of the GLB rights movement. Also speaking was Michael Callen, a member of the Flirtations and a ten-year survivor of AIDS. Callen has also authored *Surviving AIDS*, a collection containing stories of many long-term survivors. Finally, we heard from Loraine Hutchins, as she spoke about her experiences as a bisexual rights activist. Besides publishing numerous articles on the subject, she is one of the co-editors of *Bi Any Other Name*, an anthology of writings by bisexual people.

Sunday was cloaked with a bit of sadness. We knew that our queer weekend was almost over. However, we wouldn't let it end without a bang. The day was spent attending workshops and buying queer shirts, books and jewelry from vendors in the Student Center. Those students on NELGBSA's executive board met to elect new board

ROBERT LIGHTFOOT

CPA

196 Gray Road
Falmouth
Maine
04105

7 9 7 0 4 6 6

CALENDAR

SATURDAY MAY 2

The Roches perform at the Iron Horse in Northampton, MA FMI ☎ (413) 586-8686.

SUNDAY MAY 3

Women's Coffee House at Pyralisk, Montpelier, VT. Bring brown bag lunch. Music by Vermont women 6pm \$3-5.

THURSDAY MAY 7

Out and About, NH Seacoast lesbian group sponsors panel disc. on NH lesbian/gay related groups. FMI ☎ Keryn (603) 659-2139. 7-9pm.

FRIDAY MAY 8

Queer Nation NH Poster Brigade. Queer images in public places. Meet in Portsmouth. 6:30-7pm. FMI ☎ Pam (603) 436-5325.

SATURDAY MAY 9

Lesbian Liberation Rally Crafts, Raffles, Entertainment, Speakers, Music. Special guest Alix Dobkin. Center for the Arts, Northampton, MA 1-4pm. Sponsored by Lesbians for Lesbians.

Canoeing on the Lamprey River, Durham, NH sponsored by TIME OUT a NH and ME based outdoor rec. club for lesbians and gaymen. Canoe rentals available in the area. FMI ☎ Mike (603) 749-1449.

Benefit dance at Jonathan's in St. Johnsbury, VT. For NE VT Gay & Lesbian Resource. 8pm, \$5 BYOB FMI ☎ (802) 748-8645.

Women's Supper Club at La Sirena, 39 Main St, Brattleboro, VT. Resv. a must, 6 & 8pm. FMI ☎ (802) 257-4759.

Kate Clinton at First Parish Church, Portland, ME, 8pm (see ad on back page).

SUNDAY MAY 10

Women of the Woods planning potluck brunch, Plainfield, VT, 10:30am. FMI ☎ (802) 229-0109.

THURSDAY MAY 14

Ferron at the Folkway in Peterborough, NH, 8:30pm. FMI ☎ (603) 924-7484.

SATURDAY MAY 16

Lambda ♀-only dance. Pat's Peak, Henniker, NH, 8pm.

SUNDAY MAY 17

Amelia's reorg. mtg/potluck at Mandy's, Enfield, NH, 4pm. FMI ☎ (603) 632-7146.

WEDNESDAY MAY 20

Lesbian Task Force mtg Umbrella Women's Ctr, 1 Prospect Ave., St. Johnsbury, VT, 6:30pm. FMI ☎ (802) 748-8645.

FRIDAY MAY 29

Queer Nation NH meeting, Concord Feminist Health Ctr. 7pm. FMI ☎ days: (603) 224-3251 Randi; eves. (603) 774-4857 Kit.

AIDS Memorial Quilt on display at Morse High School, Bath, ME. ☎ the high school for exhibit hours.

SATURDAY MAY 30

AIDS Memorial Quilt on display at Patten Free Library, Bath, ME. ☎ the library for exhibit hours.

SUNDAY MAY 31

Women of the Woods Annual BBQ. Williamstown, VT. Bring lawnchairs & something to grill. FMI ☎ (802) 229-0109.

FRIDAY MAY 22

Hate Crimes Conf. at So. Maine Tech. College, Portland, ME. FMI ☎ Rick Wright (207) 799-7303.

East Coast Premiere of *Drawing the Line*, exhibit of photos of lesbian sex, taken by Vancouver artist Susan Stuart, range from least to most controversial. Viewers are asked to "draw their line" by writing comments on the walls. Thorne's Market's APE gallery in Northampton, MA. \$3 suggested donation. Ends 5/18. FMI ☎ (413) 586-8251.

Artists! Display your work during the ME Gay/Lesbian Film Festival 6/5, 6 & 7 at Portland Performing Arts Ctr. FMI ☎ (207) 774-5242 Wendy (207) 871-1817 (Kim).

LESBIAN/GAY PRIDE

Boston Gay Pride March Saturday, 6/13.

Portland Gay Pride March Saturday, 6/6.

FESTIVALS

East Coast Lesbians' Festival Poyntele, PA (NY/PA border) 6/18-21. FMI ☎ (510) 763-9228 or write Particular Productions, 279 Lester Ave., Oakland, CA 94606.

Northampton Lesbian Festival, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA. FMI ☎ (413) 586-8251. 7/25-26.

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, Hart, MI. FMI (brochure & tix) write to WWTMC, Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458. 8/11-16.

NOTICE

Merrymeeting AIDS Support Ser. new office: 8 Lincoln St., Brunswick, ME. Mail: P.O.B. 57, Brunswick, ME 04011. ☎ (207) 725-4955.

EVERBRITE CLEANING



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More NEWS from page 1

ledgement for her Lesbian partner and their son.

The songwriting team of Alan Menken and Howard Ashman won the Oscar for the Best Original Song for "Beauty and the Beast." Ashman, a lyricist, died last year at age 40 of complications from AIDS. Accepting the award for Ashman was his companion Bill Lauch, who told the worldwide audience that "Howard and I shared a home and a life together." He said Ashman was the "first Academy Award given to someone we've lost to AIDS."

Actor Richard Gere, on hand to present an award, took a moment before announcing the winner to urge viewers to pressure their elected officials to redirect funds from defense budgets into AIDS research.

In the first hour of the nearly four-hour broadcast, show host Billy Crystal, who was wearing a red ribbon on his lapel, explained its significance as a symbol of support for the struggle of people with AIDS. More than three dozen celebrities crossing the stage Monday night also wore the ribbons, including Whoopi Goldberg, Sylvester Stallone, Angela Lansbury, Karl Malden, Spike Lee, Kevin Costner, Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman. Also wearing the ribbons were Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone, stars of the controversial film *Basic Instincts*, the subject of recent Gay protests. Jessica Tandy, star of *Fried Green Tomatoes*, which has won kudos and criticism from Gays, did wear a red ribbon. Actress Jodie Foster and director Jonathan Demme of *Silence of the Lambs*, which has also been the target of criticism from the Gay community, also wore the red ribbons; co-star Anthony Hopkins did not. ▼

This month's NEWS comes from *Amelia's Spring 92 Newsletter* and *The Washington Blade*.

REBIRTHING: AN ALTERNATIVE PATH TO HEALING

by Edna Healy

Rebirthing is a self-development technique which uses special breathing patterns and heightened body awareness to help integrate experiences which we find difficult to accept. Rebirthing helps us establish a new relationship to our experiences. We cannot change what our experiences have been, but what we can change is our relationship to them. It assists us in finding ways to attain an attitude of acceptance toward whatever your feelings or experiences are. It is not about suppressing feelings, it is about truly being in acceptance with whatever we are feeling.

All of our experiences are held in our bodies at a cellular level. We have memories stored in our bodies. When we have experiences which we find difficult to accept we generally hold our breath or control the exhale in an attempt to not feel what is going on. This creates a block in our energy field. When we create this block we internalize negative thoughts about ourselves. We are shutting down our life force, our connection to Spirit by stopping our own life-giving flow of energy which is our breath. Notice how many times while reading this article you hold or control your breath in some way.

During a rebirthing session a circular breath is used, that is, a breath in which the inhale is connected to the exhale. This activates all the energy in our bodies and makes us aware of places where we hold energy that is blocked. In a rebirthing

session you are guided to focus your attention on these blocked energy patterns which may manifest as tingling, sadness, anger, joy, to name a few.

You are guided to keep breathing through these patterns rather than clamping down on your breath. By focusing attention on these patterns and breathing through them with an attitude of acceptance, the pattern will integrate. You can't change what your experience has been, the "content" of your experience. What you can change is the "context" or how you relate to your experience. Some examples of these contexts or thoughts that help you shift your perception are: "honor it as a teacher," "know that by feeling it, you are healing it," "the Goddess is guiding your process." We are all unique human beings - different contexts will work for different individuals.

At the moment of integration we are at total acceptance with whatever we are feeling. Our breath is flowing freely, we are at peace with ourselves. This gives us a direct experience of

divine energy, an intense connection to our spiritual selves. Negative thought patterns associated with the energy pattern will shift.

Many of us feel angry but are afraid to feel it fully. Or we have sadness and think if we acknowledge the depth of our grief it will never go away. This results in us being in conflict with ourselves, in effect, making ourselves wrong for being alive and having experiences and emotions which are natural to all human beings. Many of us from dysfunctional families have experienced anger and rage in such a negative way that we are terrified of having that feeling come up for ourselves. We feel like we could go out of "control" because we know how much rage we have deep inside. I worked with a client who was physically abused as a child and not allowed to show her feelings. She was hit if she displayed any anger and told "I'll give you something to cry about" when she felt sad or was in physical pain from being abused. She was ter-

More REBIRTHING ✦ page 11



REBIRTHING ENERGY WORK

Edna Healy

(207) 761-9483

HOMOPHOBIA ON THE HIGHWAY

by Malita Argyle

It is easy to operate under the illusion that fairness and safety exist, even if one is a Lesbian. Just when you think you have figured out how homophobia manifests itself in your life, you can be abruptly reminded that the forms it takes are infinite and varied. This was the case on April 17, 1991.

It's been more than a year since I agreed to run an errand for my employer that resulted in a near-fatal accident. My car had become disabled during the course of the trip and was capable of going only 15 mph at the time I was hit. I was trying to make it back to San Francisco from Sonoma County and had been driving on the shoulder of the road with my flashers on for the last couple of miles. When I came to a bridge with no shoulder, I waited at the foot of the bridge for about 15 minutes, hoping that if I cooled the car off enough it would be able to muster more speed on the grade ahead. When I continued up the hill, there was no traffic in sight until I was half way up the bridge. At that point, the cars approaching behind me had more than a mile to see me, since the bridge was on an incline and it was mid-afternoon on a clear day.

The most important facts about this case have nothing to do with what happened that day, but with who I am. I am a political Lesbian, which means most people would not question my identity as a Lesbian. It is important to me not to pass or to leave any question about my lesbianism. Also, the

accident happened at the height of the Gulf War Massacre fervor. I had affixed political commentary to the car, the most provocative of which stated "GET THAT WARMONGER OUT OF THE WHITEHOUSE." I know that the bumperstickers were a factor in how I was treated. The people who stopped, after the accident, had only seen the car and the bumperstickers when they decided to pull the other driver out of his car and not bother to find out if I was dead or alive.

When I managed to pull myself out of the car I found the other driver sitting on the curb while a young woman mopped his head. He was a local 77 year old, white male. He did not seem terribly coherent then and has yet to make a statement that does not sound extremely confused. I do not believe that he was very clearheaded before the accident either, since he didn't see me for quite a length of time, even though he had ample opportunity to do so. When he impacted my car he hit the left rear, spinning me around to the right so that my car was stopped only by a concrete retaining wall. I am extremely lucky he was not driving a heavier car or I would have gone off the side of the bridge.

The woman who I had found mopping the other driver's head when I got out of the car was overtly hostile to me. At one point, I was talking to another person about how the accident happened. The woman was nearby and overheard the conversation and

became insistent that my version was wrong and that I had caused the accident. Her account of the accident later became the basis of the police report. She blamed me not only for the accident, but claimed that I had hit the other driver. This would have been impossible, given that the impact was to the rear of my car. The only way this could have happened is if I had backed into the other driver. Even the police found this too outrageous to credit and modified their report to say that I had cut the other driver off while changing lanes, but that he had hit me. Still the first witness was treated with credibility.

Originally, another witness, the other driver and I, had essentially the same story (the second witness changed his story to match the first witness after being contacted by the police). Our version contradicted the first witness' story and maintained that the other driver had been behind me in the same lane and rear-ended me (though in each account the other driver has been uncertain about which lane we were both in and sometimes describes it as the left lane and at other times as the right lane). The police version contradicts the physical evidence, since the car was damaged from the rear on the left side. If I had been coming into the right lane from the left lane, I should have been hit on the right side. In spite of all this and the fact that the

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lesbian and gay people have no legal guarantees against discrimination here, not a one. Timely indeed, then, is Councilor Peter O'Donnell's proposal of a city-wide anti-discrimination ordinance in Portland. The push is on to educate city councilors and pass the bill, so get involved now if you want to learn some city politics - and make history.

Portland School of Art suffers the phobes, too, and students have decided that they do in fact need an organized lesbian and gay presence on campus. Recently, a crayon-wielding vandal defaced an AIDS Project poster at the university, obsessively circling elbows and shoulders where the bodies of the two pictured men touched. Without organization one can't count on safety and decent treatment; PSA students may now deter such creeps from thinking homohatred is not only funny, but acceptably commonplace.

Younger students, too, are getting organized these days. Oppression of queers ties in intimately to the systematic oppression of youth, as well as women, and nowhere are these connections more apparent than in the twists and turns of our national AIDS epidemic. With urban rates of AIDS among gay white drug-free men slowly declining, the two most common targets of HIV now will be women and teenagers; the number of teen AIDS cases, now 9,000, is doubling every

14 months.

The TASL activists at Kennebunk High show us that youth, even in a fairly wealthy town, can be denied crucial, life-preserving education. They are instead answered with denial bordering on idiocy, and admonished with a killing, nearly psychotic American prudery. Schools and other youths' institutions tend to control bodies more than to develop minds; hence the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), the sole organization ever to be chartered by the U.S. Government, and its refusal to allow openly queer Den Mothers and leaders. And by the way, queerboy misogyny don't help either. "Our" Paper finally printed a story about lesbomom Terry's rejection from the Boy Scouts, after a sickening 5-month silence. The title: "Discrimination Is Still the Issue." You betcha.

As Queer Nation's gorgeously successful April 13 rally at Portland's BSA headquarters pointed out, we are at least as "morally straight" as their beloved heteros. What matters is not narrowly set configurations of family and sex, but the more meaningful goal of ethical conduct that the Boy Scouts espouse. For example, "Respect and defend the rights of all people," as Queer Nationals chanted out of the Boy Scout Handbook. One wonders if the BSA finds "enslave yourself to capitalist heterosexism" more of a pressing imperative. But you and I know the truth: one nuclear family can ruin your whole day. And speaking of things nuclear, the question also remains

whether an often pseudomilitary organization - in which boys in uniform follow rules to earn badges, while fathers tend to lead and mothers to cook and play host - will ever come to embody feminist and queer-positive values.

In lesbians' and women's activism this month, at least two direct action groups look promising and ripe for the joining: the recently formed Feminists Against Rape (FAR), and the nascent WHAC!, Women's Health Action Coalition. FAR brings a sorely needed sense of outrage to the eternal outbreak of criminal woman-hatred that we face. Holding frequent rallies and aiming to change the priorities of the police, the press and Joe Q. Abusive Twit when it comes to hate crime, FAR holds the men in power accountable. With luck, or rather with con-continued good organizing, FAR will expose and eliminate media & gov-ernment complicity in that favorite American pastime, the destruction of women.

WHAC! will focus on lesbian health issues and on reproductive rights, but remains open to suggestions and new whactivists. All-Mama Film Makers (AMFM), WHAC's video production arm, welcomes the contributions of all of you talented wimmin out there for its upcoming summer film project, tentatively titled "Portland Is Burning." The flick will feature a dyke drag ball and safer sex information for lesbians, as well as untold other groovy scenarios.

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themselves," he added, noting that a congressional panel had recently called the federal government's response to AIDS "a national disgrace."

"This is why Magic Johnson is threatening to quit the Commission. He realizes that Bush won't take the good advice of his own public health experts," Lyons said.

Fifteen-year-old Sarah Fecto of TASL was impressed with the teen turnout, but disappointed with the President's silence. "He has got to realize that teens do have sex and they will die if they don't get the information and the condoms," Fecto said.

Bush told reporters he had no comment on the day's events. ▽

More LETTERS from page 3

participate in the boy scouts of amerikkka, is comparable to fighting for a lesbian's right to join the ku klux klan or a neo-nazi group. It doesn't make sense to me and i don't get why so many lesbians are involved in this issue. i refuse to work for a lesbian's right to partici-

RESOURCE GUIDE

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pate in an organization that threatens the lives of lesbians, other wombyn & girls.

What i perceive as necessary right now, is for lesbians to overthrow the boy scouts, not try to change it. Patriarchy needs to be dismembered not reformed.

Ana Kissed

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witnesses have disappeared, both the witnesses and the police report continue to be treated with credibility. The implications of the accident go far beyond the actual circumstances. I will never trust again that a random group of people will necessarily be honest about what they've witnessed or that the police won't view this as another opportunity to fault someone they don't like. My last employer (now being sued by the voracious lawyer of the other driver) must continually question whether it is worth hiring a lesbian and potentially having to pay for it.

For his part, I don't believe the other driver actually knew what happened. His written decriptions of the accident, do describe him as being in the same lane as me and noticing me 50 feet ahead of him "slowing down." To my knowlege, his story has not followed the witnesses' and the police's lead in this (though who knows what his lawyer is saying on his behalf). Whatever was going on with him, he wasn't present enough as a driver to know what he was doing. So the next time he hits someone he will still have a clean driving record. Will it take hitting a straight white male to remove him from the road? How dangerous does he have to be for the homophobia of the police to be overruled by other considerations?

I know as injustices go this

one doesn't begin to compare with the kind of abuse that the police are capable of or match their usual excesses. Though less extreme, it was in some ways similar to the treatment of Earth First activist, Judy Bari who was in a car that exploded and then was accused of planting the bomb herself. There is no way to adequately describe what it feels like to come close to being killed by someone and then being told you were the reason it happened. It is a violation of one's most basic sense of reality and justice.

In the end, homophobia affects everyone - the witnesses, the police and even the other driver. They all remain in danger because it was more important to them to scapegoat than to find out what really happened. They foster the illusion that they are secure because the "good" people have been protected. Will they be as disparaging of the next person he hits or will they still feel they have protected him if he dies in the next accident? No one is safe when conclusions are based on phobia rather than reality. ▽

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Linking us various activists is our common knowledge that we have to fight and organize to get our rights. We can't slip into the incautious complacency fostered by even the best paternalistic institutions, be they schools, family, or political groups themselves. As a part of this vigilance, we work to ensure that the mainstream press, the establishment-gay press, and the alternative press all do their jobs decently, so that we can free ourselves up for the tasks of organizing people, changing institutions, redistributing the world's riches and all they bestow.

How to contact groups mentioned in this column (all area code 207):

ACT UP Portland - 774-8475
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6/92

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10/92

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members, and the rest of us retired to our rooms to regain our energy. We needed it for the send-off dance that was thrown at a nearby club. It was there that we shook our butts, said our goodbyes, and packed up our cars to bring

back a wealth of information and memories of good times had.

So for you collegiate queers who want to learn a lot and have a great time to boot, keep your eye out for NELGBSA's 10th Annual Conference. It may be coming to a school near you! ▼

More REBIRTHING from page 7

rified to show her anger even at small things because she was afraid of hurting someone, as she had been hurt growing up. This resulted in patterns of depression, excessive alcohol and drug use. Some of her thought patterns were "if I get angry I'll kill someone," "getting angry is wrong - it hurts people," "I'll die if I get angry." As survivors of emotional, physical or sexual abuse, feeling intense emotions can be a frightening experience. As we shut down to our rage we also shut down to our ability to feel joy. We are cutting off our life force. In her Rebirth sessions, she was able to allow her suppressed rage to surface. Using the circular breath and contexts such

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